

## Message Text

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ACTION IO-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04

H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 EB-07 /087 W

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R 201532Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY VALLETTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6668

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

US MISSION 1644

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PORG, MT

SUBJECT: MALTA ADMITTED INTO GROUP OF 77

REF: VALLETTA 0082; USUN 0599

1. MALTA'S FORMAL ADMISSION INTO FULL MEMBERSHIP OF THE GROUP OF 77 AT THE RECENT CONFERENCE IN MANILA HAS BEEN HAILED IN MALTA AS "ANOTHER DIPLOMATIC TRIUMPH" AND AS VINDICATION OF MINTOFF'S NON-ALIGNED FOREIGN POLICY.

2. IN REPORTING TO THE MALTESE PARLIAMENT ON THE MANILA CONFERENCE, THE HEAD OF THE MALTESE DELEGATION, MINISTER OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE JOE CASSAR, SKETCHED THE BACKGROUND OF THE PRESENT SOCIALIST GOVERNMENT'S EFFORTS TO WIN ADMISSION TO THE GROUP OF 77 AND CRITICIZED THE PREVIOUS NATIONALIST GOVERNMENT FOR ITS FAILURE TO TAKE THIS STEP WHEN IT WAS IN POWER. AS A RESULT OF THIS NATIONALIST "FAILURE," CASSAR SAID, THE SOCIALIST GOVERNMENT ON ASSUMING OFFICE IN 1971 "FOUND ITSELF

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INCLUDED IN ANOTHER GROUP COMPOSED OF RICH AND DEVELOPED

COUNTRIES WHICH NOT ONLY DO NOT NEED OUTSIDE AID BUT WHICH ARE IN DUTY BOUND TO HELP OTHERS."

3. CASSAR DEFINED MALTA'S NEW MEMBERSHIP IN THE GROUP OF 77 AS "AN IMPORTANT STEP IN THE POLICY OF THE SOCIALIST GOVERNMENT TO OBTAIN FOR MALTA THE AID REQUIRED FOR ITS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT." HE SAID THAT IF MALTA HAD BEEN A MEMBER OF THE GROUP IN JULY, 1974, "THE UNITED NATIONS SEABED AUTHORITY HEADQUARTERS WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY HAVE BEEN SITED IN MALTA RATHER THAN JAMAICA." CASSAR THANKED THOSE COUNTRIES WHICH ASSISTED MALTA IN WINNING ADMISSION--"ESPECIALLY OUR FRIENDS -- ARAB COUNTRIES AND ESPECIALLY LIBYA."

4. NATIONALIST OPPOSITION LEADER BORG OLIVIER, WHILE TAKING MILD EXCEPTION TO CASSAR'S CRITICISM OF THE FORMER GOVERNMENT HE HEADED AS PRIME MINISTER, NEVERTHELESS "EXPRESSED SATISFACTION" AT MALTA'S ACCEPTANCE IN THE GROUP OF 77.

5. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH SOME NATIONALIST MAY GRUMBLE TO US PRIVATELY ABOUT MALTA'S BEING LUMPED WITH OTHER MEMBERS OF THE GROUP OF 77, MOST TAKE THE MORE PRAGMATIC VIEW THAT SINCE THEY CONSIDER MALTA IS STILL A DEVELOPING COUNTRY, THE MOVE IS PROBABLY WISE IF MALTA CAN IN FACT DERIVE REAL BENEFITS FROM MEMBERSHIP. CERTAINLY THIS SUCCESSFUL CULMINATION OF A 4-YEAR EFFORT TO WIN ADMISSION WILL BE USED SKILLFULLY BY MINTOFF TO HIS ADVANTAGE IN THE COMING GENERAL ELECTION. SMITH

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